CENTENNIAL PLAY

Christians' Reveille

A DRAMA OF THE BEGINNINGS OF NORTH CAROLINA DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

BY

CHARLES CROSSFIELD WARE

PUBLISHED BY

THE NORTH CAROLINA CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY CONVENTION,

BOX 1164, WILSON, N. C.

BOOKS BY CHARLES CROSSFIELD WARE

1927—*A History of Disciples of Christ in North Carolina.*

1932—*Barton Warren Stone, Pathfinder of Christian Union.*

1942—*Tar Heel Disciples, 1841-1852.*

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FOREWORD

This Centennial play is written for the one-hundredth annual session of The North Carolina Christian Missionary Convention, meeting in the Wilson, North Carolina, Christian Church, November 8-10, 1944.

Dramatic license is obvious in the flow of monolog and dialog in the script, but the whole is historically consistent. It is true, that an eastern North Carolina woman turned Barton Stone to his western career; that the stars fell on Edenton while Thomas Campbell was there, and that he used a snuff-box for a long period, quitting it about the time indicated; and that Jacob Utley was a leading opponent of the Disciples. These and other incidents of the play may be well-documented from authentic sources.

There originated on the central coastal plains of North Carolina one of the oldest Disciple cultures in America. For those having eyes to see, residual features of that culture continue, notwithstanding the century's radical development. Herewith is a dramatic version of Carolina Disciples as they began to flower.

CHARLES CROSSFIELD WARE,
Wilson, North Carolina,
May 24, 1944.

CHRISTIANS' REVEILLE

A DRAMA OF THE BEGINNINGS OF NORTH CAROLINA DISCIPLES OF CHRIST.

EPISODE I

BARTON STONE TURNS TO TRANSYLVANIA

PLACE: A Country Churchyard in Eastern North Carolina.

DATE: May 1, 1796.

CHARACTERS: The Voice
Barton Stone
Robert Foster
Sarah Dillahunt

[*"The Voice," is that of the Director, who recites the connected narrative throughout the play, for periods other than those of stage presentation by the actors.*]

The Voice: George Washington is beginning his second administration as President of the new Republic. Candles burn low on a winter evening, cold and damp. Oaken ember smolders to ash on the cabin floor of David Caldwell, Teacher, and Patriot, of the Carolina wilderness. A few miles through the forest stands Guilford Courthouse, symbol of liberty's tide in the Revolution, and New Garden Meeting House, venture of the spiritual mind for peace and freedom. The good wife, Rachel, busy at the loom all day, has admonished David of the lateness of the hour and of his proneness to study overmuch. It is time for repose. Some lights yet flicker in the nearby student quarters, as youth toils to make the grade under the master, who as "Grandfather" of America's oldest State University is a classic example of the instructor on one end of a log with his student on the other.

There comes a gentle knock at the door.

"Why, Barton, come in! What can I do for you here at this bedtime hour," says the Teacher.

"Well, Doctor Caldwell, I have put off telling you as long as I can, but I am sure now that I will have to leave the school before I complete the course."

"Hear! Hear! Barton Stone, what is all this about. What is your trouble?"

"Doctor, you must know that I am far behind in paying you for my education. I see no means of getting funds to settle. To be honest, I will have to go and maybe return to you at some chance."

"There now, that will never do, Barton. Lots of things, not so good, can happen to a boy when he gets out of school, especially when his training has not been thorough. Now I tell you, you just stay right here and finish, and I will trust you to pay me when you get out. There is every reason why you should do this. I expect fully your affirmative decision."

"Doctor, if you feel that way about it, I suppose that I should stay. If you trust me, surely I ought to trust myself. You will help me to get a school. I promise that out of my first money as a teacher I will pay you every shilling."

Rachel leaves her loom, taking a seat with her husband and the student at the fireside.

She speaks: "Barton, did I hear you say that you are to teach, because you must have money? Now what is to become of that precious promise you made to me when you found your Redeemer in the great revival at Alamance? You said with joy then that you would preach the everlasting Gospel as surely as God gave you breath."

"Mrs. Caldwell, I appreciate your faith in me, but all I can say is I must follow the leadings of Providence."

"Yes, Providence! That is right, Barton. When the revival first came here, you said it made you sick, and you were going to sneak back to Virginia, but Providence used a very stormy day to keep you here. Then you got all twisted up in your emotions in the revival and you seemed so distraught, until William Hodge

preached that sermon on "God is Love"; then you came through gloriously, praised be His Holy Name! Yes, Providence is going right on with you to the end of your days, Barton. You must preach because you have seen the light. In all conscience you have got to preach. And, Barton, I know what I say about Providence, for He has been with me always. In the awful King George War when Cornwallis had a big price on Doctor Caldwell's head, the Doctor had to hide in the thickest brush. Then one evening enemy spies came here telling me they were from our own General Greene's camp, and they said they just had to know the Doctor's whereabouts. I was deceived and told them what they wanted to know, but I could then see in their eyes that I had acted a mistake. Then I prayed all night with all my soul, that they might not take the Doctor. Then it was that Providence, working in the mind of my husband, warned him, so he rode away to safety just in time. I know Providence! He is my dear unfailing friend!"

Under such influence the student struggles on. Finishing Dr. Caldwell's course, he is set on his ministerial way by John Springer, devoted young preacher. Returning to Hawfields, North Carolina, in April 1796, for his license, Stone has the joyful guidance of "Father Pattillo," who kept the predestinarian creed from becoming a stumbling block by his tactful questions. Stone receives his license. Then comes his assignment to a traveling mission of the Orange Presbytery. He is paired with Robert Foster, his schoolmate and fellow-minister. Their field is eastern North Carolina.

We now look in on them as these two young men come to a great decision.

[*The curtian rises. Barton Stone, standing, has saddle bags across his left shoulder, while Robert Foster walks into the Churchyard. Sarah Dillahunt sits within earshot but unseen behind the "horse-block." Stage has candles, and pedestal resembling "horse-block."*]

Barton Stone: Why Robert Foster, what are you doing here? When you left me last Friday you said you would go your way to Florida, and I could go mine.

Robert Foster: Well, so it is. We are both on our way, Barton. You know I am terribly disappointed with the people here in this country. They don't seem to have any religion. And the worst of it is, I don't seem to have any, myself. You know, I just don't believe I am fit to preach.

Barton Stone: Robert, you are better than I, and if that is a true confession from you, then I am certain I am not fit to preach. W'y the people just seem to be deaf when I preach to them. Of course, they treat us both very well, with plenty to eat, and all comforts of good living, with plenty of time to fish and hunt, with all these negroes to work. But, when we get down to talking God to them, they seem to say by their attitude, "That's just fine, young fellows, you do the preaching of those pretty ideas, and we'll all have a good and easy time of it." Pshaw! I am all done and through.

Robert Foster: That goes for me, too. I want to get down to Florida among those Indians and Spaniards, clear out of these United Colonies. They can't be any worse than what we have here. I will surely be a free man there.

Barton Stone: But hold, Robert! Do you think that is the Christian thing for us to do?

Robert Foster: Well, Barton, what is a Christian? I'd like to know. I see none in these parts.

Barton Stone: "That's right, you have asked a fair question. We ought to put our heads on it, and get the answer, and it ought to be so plain when we put it down, that one can read it while he runs.

[*Barton Stone hesitates, opens a saddle bag and continues.*]

Robert, good for us! I think that I have it right here. You remember that President Samuel Davies of New Jersey College said it a good generation ago in a sermon on "The Sacred Import of The Christian Name."

And here it is. [*Thumbs the pages of Vol. I of "Sermons" by Davies.*] Do you want me to read it?

Robert Foster: Let's have it.

[*Barton Stone reads the following excerpts from Vol. I, "Sermons," by Davies, pages 304-313, edition, London, 1792.*]

"Acts 11:26—'The Disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.'

"The original word which is here rendered 'called' seems to intimate that they were called Christians by divine appointment, for it generally signifies an oracular nomination or a declaration from God; and to this purpose it is generally translated. Hence it follows that the very name Christian, as well as the thing was of a divine original, assumed not by a private agreement of the disciples among themselves but by the appointment of God . . . .

"A Christian! a Christian! let that be your highest distinction; let that be the name which you labor to deserve. God forbid that my ministry should be the occasion of diverting your attention to anything else. . . . I will tell you [*with Mr. Baxter*] 'I am a Christian; of no other religion; my Church is the Christian Church! The Bible! the Bible! is my religion; and if I am a dissenter, I dissent only from modes and forms of religion which I cannot find in my Bible; and which therefore I conclude have nothing to do with religion, much less shall they be made terms of Christian communion, since Christ, the only lawgiver of His Church has not made them such. . . .

"To be a Christian is to be like to Christ, from whom the name is taken: it is to be a follower and imitator of Him; to be possessed of His spirit and temper; and to live as He lived in the world; it is to have those just, exalted, and divine notions of God and divine things, and that just and full view of our duty to God and man, which Christ taught; in short it is to have our sentiments, our temper, and practice, formed upon the sacred model of the gospel." [*Returns book to saddle bags.*]

Barton Stone: Robert Foster, that is plain Bible truth. If I ever get to be a real preacher that's what I will preach. You know that "Father" Pattillo, who gave us our license last month said the same thing. You remember that he was a student of President Davies. They saw eye to eye. This truth also ought to settle forever that old predestination muddle, about who is elect and who is not elect. Responsible persons who choose to be Christians are the elect, and those responsible who choose otherwise, are just not elected. I believe it is as simple as that. These ideas are getting hold of me like gunpowder does a bullet. But, ipso facto, we are flashes in the pan! We are running away!

Robert, I had a dream the other night about which I ought to tell you. In my vision I was preaching by the riverside. The shore was covered with people as far as my eye could see. There were preachers from several denominations too. My appeal fell like the sword of the Spirit on that multitude. There was great visible agony under the swift and steady strokes. Such strange things happen in dreams. My pulpit on the river bank gave way and I was plunged into water. I toiled out. I felt so grandly that I went right on preaching. But then most of that great audience faded away. Then my preachers all went away, too, except one dear soul. Glorious climax—those who staid, said they were Christians only. Then my joy was too great for me to tell you, as my soul was lifted to the seventh heaven in my dream.

Robert Foster: [*With emphasis*] Yes, this whole thing is a dream. And a nightmare too. Let's get out of here.

[*They move forward as if going on their journey, when Sarah Dillahunt arises from her seat behind the horse-block, confronting them*]

Sarah Dillahunt: Listen, you runaway parsons. May I have a word with you? I heard you, as I sat over there. I claim to be one of these Christians amidst the big drove of sinners you have talked so rudely about. I heard you young blades preach down by the Pamlico. [*She hesitates, while the two men edge away.*]

Robert Foster: We don't mean to be unkind, good woman, but what you have to say, you had better say it right now, for we are getting mounted.

Sarah Dillahunt: Well, what I have to say, is no dream. It is sober fact. This is an old settled country Sometimes I think we have too many preachers here; who preach all winds of doctrine, which blow our people about every way. And that Florida you talk about is not even under our Betsy Ross flag. I wouldn't go there. But young men, there is the call of our great west, a grand nation coming up beyond the blue ranges. Many of our neighbors have gone there. They say that in every material prospect it is a heavenly country, but gospel preaching is scarce there; ungodliness is terrible; and uncounted souls are dying there without Jesus. There you would have plenty of room to make Christians only, and you might even get all Christians to come together and be one people just as our Master prayed.

[*The young men, embarrassed, hesitate.*]

Sarah Dillahunt: Make up your mind, boys! What are you going to be? A couple of horseback Jonahs, fleeing you know not where. Or two of our Lord's over-mountain missionaries, fighting it out for God on the western waters.

Barton Stone: [*Slowly, emotionally*] Mother, so help us, you have put us on the right trail. So I feel. What do you say, Robert?

Robert Foster: I go with you!

Sarah Dillahunt: Heaven's blessings attend you. And don't you come back here until you see it through for God over there.

[*Curtain falls.*]

EPISODE II

THOMAS CAMPBELL SEES SHOOTING STARS

PART I

PLACE: Parlor in General William Clark's Residence, 209 Cotanche Street, Greenville, North Carolina.

DATE: February 14, 1834.

CHARACTERS: The Voice
Thomas Campbell
Louisa Clark
Priscilla Clark

The Voice: Thomas Meredith's flock, by the bright yellow waters of the Albemarle, is disturbed. Three men are peeved and are silently opposed to their pastor; and will not support him so as to maintain his confidence. He resents it deeply. He resigns, and leaves the door wide open for an aggressive traveller from Kentucky, with his recently evolved conviction that baptism is for the remission of sins. The Kentuckian is Dr. Hall, who is a dentist for his bread and butter, and a preacher of his new faith for the passionate indulgence of his soul. Meredith's people have heard Hall gladly through his brief stay in the summer of 1833. Now he has come back to Edenton when the leaves are turning saffron and scarlet, and the frosts lie heavy in the pocosins. He has brought with him a saintly soul—"The Morning Star of the Reformation." It is no other than Thomas Campbell.

Near the dawn of Wednesday, November 13th the travellers are at the home of their host, Thomas Waff. They are making ready for the mount of Dr. Hall as he is to ride to Norfolk to rejoin Alexander Campbell in their tour of eastern American cities. Suddenly there is a moaning and shouting in the street. Attracted to their window the guests are thrilled with the unearthly coruscating light which flooded the earth. It

is the most brilliant meteoric shower of that American century.

Hark! the moaning of a slave: "Ole Massa, Massa, de Judgment Day am shorely here! Blessed Jesus I knowed that you was a coming. Oh Lordy, Lord, save me! save me now!

Dr. Hall speaks: "Father Campbell, what do you make of all this?"

"Why, Brother Hall, it is just a heavenly phenomenon, which rarely comes, but when it does come, it adds a thrilling chapter in declaring the glory of God and the showing forth of His handiwork. I think that for us it also has a special meaning. The meteors of the ecclesiastical heavens are certainly shaking. They cannot long retain their places, and hold the admiring gaze of the deluded multitude. They must fall, and all their glory with them must soon die away. None but the real, the fixed stars, which cannot be shaken, will remain."

Our story unfolds. Months of loneliness, illness, and frustration come to "Father" Campbell in his experience on the Albemarle. He calls it his Patmos. He is guileless. He fondly hopes that his message wrought in the integrity of truth and abounding in love, will necessarily win the day. He is an idealist, not a crusader. He is disillusioned. He is naïve in his confession of failure. Soon he must go to a more responsive field.

At the postoffice in Edenton one morning he receives the January copy of his beloved Millennial Harbinger. There on page 44 is the printed letter from General William Clark of Greenville, reminding him that there were other friends in Carolina whom he should hasten to see. Soon he rode the trail to Tarboro. There he saw the printer, engaging him to publish in a pamphlet the justification of his Edenton adventure. It is done over the names of this three best friends in Edenton, Waff, Manning and Skinner. He rides to the town of Greenville. We now look in on the history he is making there.

[*Curtain rises. Stage arranged to represent a parlor of that period in an aristocratic southern home. Louisa Clark, wife of General William Clark is sitting alone on the divan, while Priscilla, her daughter, enters immediately with a leather-bound Bible.*]

Priscilla Clark: [*As she enters.*] Here it is, Mother,—that Campbellite Bible you asked for.

Louisa Clark: I told you not to say that, Priscilla. It is "The Living Oracles." Did you see that Elder Campbell's room is arranged properly? Did Liza put everything in neatness and order, and did Stephen bring up fuel and shine the visitor's boots?

Priscilla Clark: [*Seated by her mother*] You know what I saw there in the Elder's room. Now don't get angry with me. I wasn't snooping. It was laid right on the sideboard. A snuff box! Mother, do you think an Elder ought to use snuff?

Louisa Clark: That's impudence! To say that in a country which is so fond of its tobacco! Moreover he may be a very moderate user of it. We cannot be critical of these little personal habits of our guest.

Priscilla Clark: Mother that was an awful long prayer of the Elder at supper. Do you think Elders ought to pray so long?

Louisa Clark: Priscilla! There you have gone and added irreverence to your impudence. Another slip, like that, young lady, and you'll lose your deportment prize.

Priscilla Clark: Mother, I can't help these thoughts, and I simply must tell them to somebody. Why are you so attracted in your mind to this stranger?

Louisa Clark: He is not really a stranger. The writings of him and his son have been coming to this house for years. We have some of them bound. Look at that shelf. This very Bible I have in my hand is precious. It is my favorite, and my joy to read. This is my evening of conference with Elder Campbell. Go tell him that I wish to see him here.

[*Priscella ushers Campbell into the parlor and retires. Campbell is seated on the divan besides Mrs. Clark.*]

Louisa Clark: Welcome to our hearth and home, Elder Campbell. The temporary absence of General Clark, I regret. He went to preach with Elder Jeremiah Leggett at the Third Sunday appointment at Tranters Creek, and to look after our plantation near there. He will return in about a week.

Thomas Campbell: Madame, seeing that Bible in your hands, makes me think you are a Christian.

Louisa Clark: I wish that I could say as much. No, I haven't had my call. It may come though any time. I have waited long.

Thomas Campbell: Will you be so kind, dear woman, as to tell me what you mean by "call."

Louisa Clark: I see you must not know our section so well or you would not ask me such a question. You know, Elder, about all these conversions under the New Covenant. There is Cornelius, and he had a vision. There is Saul of Tarsus blinded by the blazing light. Even on the Day of Pentecost, the three thousand saw fire like cloven tongues. Now I can't think that I can become one of the precious few who are saved, unless God "calls" me by an experience like that. And it hasn't come to me yet!

Thomas Campbell: Madame, your trouble should be easily resolved, if you will just read your Bible well enough. Now there is a great variety of conversions, because there is a great variety of persons and situations. Have you studied the case of the Ethiopian treasurer. You know he was a good man, and all he needed was a clear interpretation of pertinent scripture. He got it and he became a Christian in obeying it. God's call may come in ways beyond number, but obedience to it is always just one thing—the acceptance of Christ as your personal Savior, and letting His will be supreme in your life.

Louisa Clark: You give me a flood of light on my way. There also is the case of Lydia. Elder Campbell, do you think I could be a Lydia?

Thomas Campbell: I can best repeat what The Living Oracles say: "Whosoever will, may come."

Louisa Clark: Very well, but I must know more about your special appeal to the religious world.

Thomas Campbell: The earliest putting forth of that was in my "Declaration and Address." It was done a quarter-century ago.

Louisa Clark: Yes, I have heard of that, and the General read it once, and agreed with its sentiments, and when he told me, I said that I agreed also. As well as I recollect, it was that there could be only one Church of Christ, and that founded only on the Bible, and not on what some man says about the Bible.

Thomas Campbell: Yes, that is a fair brief, as far as it goes.

Louisa Clark: Elder, I am sick and tired of divisions in the house of God. If we could all get to-gether as Christians only, wouldn't that be a grand day for this old world.

Thomas Campbell: Sister, you are not far from the Kingdom of God.

Louisa Clark: I fear that you flatter me, for the General and I suffer yet from one unsolved puzzle. How can faith at the same time be the gift of God, and also the duty of man?

Thomas Campbell: Well, the evidence on which faith rests is the gift of God, isn't it? You believe that He sent His Son. That is supreme evidence. But God forces nobody to believe that evidence. There is where the duty of man comes in, and that duty must always be voluntarily assumed.

Louisa Clark: I praise God for the light that comes to me. Elder, I accept my humble place in the Kingdom.

[*Curtain falls.*]

EPISODE II

PART 2

PLACE: Same.

DATE: February 21, 1834.

CHARACTERS: The Voice
Thomas Campbell
General Clark
John P. Dunn
Abraham Congleton
Louisa Clark
Theresa Dunn
Winifred Rountree
Clary Dixon
Patricia McCotter
Priscilla Clark
Nancy McLawhorn
Elizabeth Lanier
Slaves: Stephen, his wife, Liza; and picka-anninies, Patsy and Penny.

The Voice: Elder Campbell is cheered by this cordial welcome of a resourceful host. He walks with dignity the streets of Greenville, and the sunshine is the brightest he has seen in the old South. The boats that come and go on the Tar River, bear him glimpses of an improving world. He thanks God and takes courage.

Louisa Clark, superb hostess on the auspicious occasion, sends a messenger at once to General Clark that he may return to Greenville promptly. By post she sends word to the preachers associated with him in their independent reform movement. She offers to them full hospitalities of their mansion during the stay of their distinguished guest. She especially invites some young ladies. The younger generation she knows must have this inspiring impact. Leaders from the congregations at Rountrees, Little Sister, Tranters Creek, and Old Ford, and the General's own flock at Grindell Creek, must surely see and talk with this great man of Bethany.

A fireside scene at Little Sister, where Abraham Congleton and Samantha, his wife, receive their message about the visitor, is typical of some current opposition.

Says Abraham: "I'm shore glad that Elder Campbell has come to our parts. His writin's I like right much. Samantha, I'm gwine to see him."

"Abraham, you simple old soul—you had better watch out. This Scotch Yankee has come down here to make Campbellite Baptists out of us. He's taking our Holy Ghost religion away for his gospel-in-the-water. Abraham, I tell you, he is the Anti-Christ. He rolls out sweet words about Christian Union, when all he wants is union with him and his kind of all the people he can fool."

"Samantha, I see I shan't take my old woman, but I'se gwine to Greenville, anyhow."

To which Samantha retorts: "Well, go on and be a water dog, and see if I care."

Our drama unfolds in the home of the Clarks:

[*The curtain rises. Stage is the same as last scene, except that more chairs are needed for the larger group which eventually appears. As the scene opens the three preachers, Clark, Dunn, and Congleton are seated in close conference.*]

General Clark: I tell you this man Campbell is making a great impression. He has already converted my wife, and Priscilla, our tart little daughter, is calling her mother the Campbellites' Lydia.

John P. Dunn: Well, if he has the truth, which we just about agree that he has, then we had better not oppose him. The truth will make us free, you know, and it is freedom we must have.

Abraham Congleton: I've done heered that this man is a abolitionist. And as for Campbellism, I ain't no Campbellite. Let's see what he has to say for hisself.

General Clark: Brethren, I think there is much we need to learn about Mr. Campbell and his views. John, will

you bring him in, and we'll see whether we stand together, or fall apart.

[*John P. Dunn ushers Campbell into the parlor.*]

John P. Dunn: [*All standing as glasses of water are passed*] Elder Campbell, as brethren of the Union Meeting of Disciples of Christ, we greet you. We drink to your health. [*They all drink, standing.*]

Thomas Campbell: I bring you the greetings of the Reformers in old Virginia and a great host beyond the Blue Mountains. [*He continues as they become seated.*] I like this company of believers. Tell me what is on your mind.

General Clark: Elder, to be plain, there be many points in your teaching about which we need more light. But first we must know what you feel about slavery.

Thomas Campbell: That is a touchy subject and our enemies harass us on all sides about it. In the North they say we are slave-drivers because we live in a slave state, but in the South we are falsely accused as abolitionists, because our family owns no slaves. Now the truth is, we are for the Christian uplift of the black as well as the white. We are loyal citizens of the South, abiding by our institutions and supporting our government. We yearn however for the day when all men shall be free.

General Clark: I see no objection. Disciples must be free from tests of fellowship about such personal opinions. Now Elder, what do you think of the name which Disciples ought to wear?

Thomas Campbell: Often we have been called "Campbellites," and always either in ignorance or malice, or sometimes, facetiously with a wink. We utterly repudiate that nick-name, and have always contended for the Bible name of Christians, or Disciples, as applied to individuals, and the name Church of Christ, or Christian Church, for the general fellowship.

General Clark: So far, so good. How often, according to your view, should Christians observe the sacrament of the Communion?

Thomas Campbell: We are coming to some difference, I know, but the Bible, which as you know, is our only creed, teaches that the early Christians came together on each Lord's Day to break bread. That is our example and we follow it. We are aware that some contend that ceremonial feet washing is a part of Communion. We understand that the Scriptures do not so teach. But we forbear, so no division is made. If they have feet-washing, let them go on with it. We think that in time, it will disappear if no contention is made.

General Clark: Brother Campbell, you must know that we are wrapped up in many traditions. If we do not go fully with you now, you must be patient with us. Give us time! I repeat, give us time! We must have the light, but only as we can stand it.

Abraham Congleton: I'm fur you Brother. You've made it clean plain to me. But a lot of folks ain't going to take this Reform. They're jined to their idols.

John P. Dunn: This is the day Brother Campbell, for which I have long prayed. Won't you stay with us? If you must go back to Virginia, please send us your son. The Lord being my helper, I will teach this grand Reform to my slaves, to my children, to my congregations, right on till my day is done. And as to you, Elder Campbell, may God speed you! [*Gentlemen rise, as women and girls followed by slaves, enter and join the group in a tea party. After tea is served by the slaves, the group is seated, with Campbell at right of General Clark and Winnifred Rountree at Campbell's right.*]

Thomas Campbell: I think, General, it is time you were telling us something of your story.

General Clark: To make a long story short, my religious enemies have twice cast me "out of the synagogue." Once from the Kehukee, where they got so iron-sided about their creed and against missions, that they weren't at home to me any more. I published them, and Cushing Hassell, of Williamston, wrote back against me. Now when I move away shortly to Mississippi, he will be sure to say that he chased me out of the

state. Then I joined up with the Neuse but last October at Fort Barnwell they threw me and Brothers Dunn and Congleton out, saying we were "Campbellites." You see we had come out for the Bible alone for our faith and practice. Now their very creed says we should do just that, and I had seen that in the creed long before I had ever heard of you. They seem to love that creed better than the good Book itself, but they don't do what their creed says in that particular. So here we stand.

Thomas Campbell: Folks, I know this is no idle tale. I could tell you scores of such stories. Let's hear some others. [*Campbell turns to Winnifred Rountree.*] Mrs. Rountree, let's hear from your congregation.

Winnifred Rountree: My husband, Jesse, started Rountrees Church nearly seven years ago. It was in the Neuse Association. When Elder Dunn got to preaching there it came out strong on Reform principles, and helped to start the Union Meeting of Disciples, I am proud to say.

Thomas Campbell: I see Mrs. Theresa Dunn over there. Mrs. Dunn, what have you to say for Little Sister?

Theresa Dunn: Elder Campbell, I am slow of speech—can't talk much. [*Hesitates.*] Will say this—Little Sister started a year later than Rountrees, but it seems like we've been Reformers from the start. My husband, Elder Dunn, he's a big preacher. He does my talking.

Clary Dixon: Elder Campbell, my husband, Winsor, says that he knows a lot of Free Will Baptists are just eager to have you explain to them more fully the Scriptures. We look for you at Hookerton now very soon. And don't you be in any hurry to leave us.

[*The four girls, Patricia McCotter, Priscilla Clark, Nancy McLawhorn, and Elizabeth Lanier, escort Thomas Campbell to the center of stage and clasping hands in a circle about him, the four girls sing the following song in proper meter of the period.*]

For Thee, Father Campbell, we sing
Home on the Buffalo
Carolina hearts are building
Other home for thee.
We sing our youthful praise
Pour forth our rapturous lays
As all our voices raise
Hail Christian Pioneer!

Hear our congregations sing
Bethany's sweet refrain
Through all Carolina ring
The Bible's grand appeal.
One church around the earth
This cause will give rebirth
Proclaim its matchless worth
Hail Christian Union!

Priscilla Clark: [*Taking snuff-box out of her bosom*] Here Mr. Campbell, is your snuff-box. I found it in the back yard. [*Chatter of surprise.*]

Thomas Campbell: Lassie, you may keep it for a souvenir. I've quit the habit.

General Clark: [*Addressing Thomas Campbell*] Elder, did you know that some of our servants can preach? Come here, Stephen! [*Stephen moves to front of Clark, bowing. Clark continues.*]

Say, Stephen's a preacher with a good conscience. He won't even play marbles. Tell us Stephen why you won't play marbles.

Stephen: Massa, you know de good Book say "marbel not!"

General Clark: [*In lordly tone*] Stephen get your black family out of here, to the kitchen, and bring them all in from the quarters, and give us a song and a sermon. Give us your best!

[*Stephen gathers his group of negroes to rear of stage, where unseen by audience they sing the following song in proper meter of the period, interlarded with shouts; "Glory, Hallelujah," "Amen, Lord," "Glory to God," "I lub my blessed Jesus," etc.*]

Hallelujah! Church Victorious,
Join the concert of the sky;
Hallelujah! Bright and glorious!
Lift, ye saints this strain on high
We poor exiles
Join not yet your melody.

Hallelujah! Strains of gladness
Comfort not the faint and worn
Hallelujah! Sounds of sadness
Best become the heart forlorn
Our offenses
We with bitter tears must mourn.

Liza: Give us dat sermon, Stephen!

Stephen: [*Irritated*] Shore, Liza! but keep dem chillun low!!

[*Stephen gives the following sermon which is an adaptation of an old version, source unknown.*]

"Strate am de road an' narrow am de paff which leads off to glory! Breden—Blevers! You am sembled dis night in comin' to hear de Word, an' have it splained an' monstrated to yu; yes you is, an' I 'tend to splain it as de lite ob libin day. We are all wicked sinners har below—it's a fack, breden, an' I tell you how it come. You see,

'Adam was de fust man,
Eve was de tudder,
Cane was de wicked man,
Kase he killed his brudder.

"Adam an' Ebe were boff black men, an' so was Cane and Able. Now I s'pose it seems to strike yer understandings how de fust white man cum. Yassah Gen'l Clark and all dem white folks. An' Missus Clark she's done and jined dem Cambul-whites. Why, I let you know: Den you see when Cane killed his brudder, de massa cum an' say, 'Cane, whar's your brudder, Able?' Cane say, 'I don't know Massa.' But de nigger node

all de time. Massa now get mad and cum again—speak mighty sharp dis time. 'Cane, whar's yur brudder Able, yu nigger?' Cane now get frightened and he turn WHITE; an' if it had not been for dat nigger Cane, we'd nebber been troubled wid de sassy whites 'pon de face of dis circumblar globe. De quire will sing de forty-eleventh hymn, tickler meter. Brudder Joe, pass around the sassar."

[*Chorus of shouts while curtain falls.*]

EPISODE III

CENTURY BEGINS AT HOOKERTON

PLACE: "Free Church," on "The Square," Hookerton, North Carolina.

DATE: May 2, 1845.

CHARACTERS: The Voice
Elder Thomas J. Latham
Elder John P. Dunn
Elder Robert Bond
Elder Benjamin Parrott
Elder John L. Clifton
Elder Jacob Utley
Winsor Dixon
Joel Joyner, Jr.
Laban Wilkinson
Ann Latham
Elizabeth Bond
Clary Dixon
Theresa Dunn
Ann Gaylord
Amy Ann Harper
Mary Heath
Cynthia Dunn
Henrietta Parrott
Elizabeth Leggett
Orpah Moye
Margaret Utley
Four Slaves (at rear)

The Voice: May day is dawning at Pantego, North Carolina, in the year of our Lord, 1834. The village drowses in the sub-tropical warmth of advancing spring. A squall from Pamlico Sound sweeps inland, refreshing the verdure with timely moisture and tossing the forest's branches as clouded day lights the perennial pines. At the home of Thomas J. Latham, the guest, Thomas Campbell, is closing his tour of the infant groups of North Carolina Disciples. He is adjusting his traveler's garb against the inclemency of the day;

putting saddle bags across his restless mare. Affectionate farewells are given.

The traveler mounts and turns in his saddle. His parting word is that of a father in Israel. He says: "It's a long trail, Brother Latham, out of the swamps of human tradition to the hill of the Lord's anointed."

He disappears under the overcast sky. As the sound of the hoofs is lost in the distance, Latham speaks to his wife: "Nancy, I have a new vision of what we must pay for this Christian reformation. We must consecrate our all to it. I pledge to it all that I may have in tongue, and pen, and purse. Our children must be taught and confirmed in it. We must so live that our own sons will be inspired for the ministry."

The flood of immigration westward from the seaboard is reaching new peaks. Disciples in the "Old North State" are held to their own resources as to personal leadership. Slowly but surely do they rise to the occasion. In 1839 the Bethel Conference of Free Will Baptists by substantial majority votes that they will not turn back after they have gone so far toward identity with Disciples. Two years later they likewise drop the last clause in their conference name, which action, Latham the scribe, thinks so significant that he begins conserving the conferential archives for posterity. Then in 1843 at Wheat Swamp comes the clear elimination of the already emasculated creed. Desire for formal consolidation with the Union Meeting of Disciples is so widespread as to warrant the saying: "Well, what are we waiting for?" That in effect is what their annual meeting in 1844, says, and a definite project for union is put forward for consummation in 1845.

At the entrance to the village postoffice in Kinston, two friends meet. It is on the eve of the Christian Union Conference at Hookerton. Robert Bond turns at the softly spoken salutation of Thomas J. Latham.

"Robert, what are we going to do at Hookerton next Friday? Will we tie up with the Disciples' Union?"

"Why not, Thomas, we have long been virtually one people."

"What about the opposition, Robert?"

"Well, there will be some opposition as you know. Jacob Utley will be there, and I think we had better seat him in conference and let him have his say. It might help to clear up matters for the open break that has to be, sooner, or later."

"Robert, as last conference had you to visit all these churches in this business what did you find out?"

"Well, our Bethel Conference outnumbers the Disciples, ten to one, and the Disciples' Union has only two preachers now, Dunn and Nobles, but these Disciples have been a powerful leaven. We are already united in all but name. That, I am sure, will be done next Friday."

"Robert, I have often wondered why the Disciples which are growing to be so powerful in the richest parts of the big west, don't send us some preachers. But I have good news to tell you. My son Josephus told me yesterday that he will study for the ministry. I pray that he makes a good one."

"Thomas, I am glad that you keep the conference book so well. Remember, that history will look back on what we do, May 2, 1845, at Hookerton."

"Yes, Robert, a hundred years of history, and more!"

[*Curtain rises. Stage is arranged as for congregational business meeting in a church auditorium, as of that period, with plank seats, having no backs, and table at front where sit the moderator, Thomas J. Latham, and the clerk, Joel Joyner, Jr. At first there is conversational chatter, followed quickly by silence when moderator raps his gavel for order.*]

Moderator Thomas J. Latham: We will now come to order and I will ask the clerk to read the matter we are to consider here today.

Clerk Joel Joyner, Jr.: [*Reads from the Bethel Conference ledger the following record of project under consideration, as submitted by their last annual conference.*]

"On motion of Elder B. Parrott, the following preamble and resolution were offered by Elder Robert Bond, and unanimously adopted by the Conference.

"Whereas union among the Disciples of Christ is desirable, as it is in accordance with the will of God, and tends to the advancement of Christianity among mankind: and whereas this Conference believes there is a number of churches of Christ in this state, that, with us, take the Holy Scriptures alone, as their infallible guide in religion: Wherefore,

"Resolved: That this conference propose a Convention for the purpose of effecting a union between the Churches of Christ represented in this Conference, and such other Churches of Christ as are willing to unite on "The Faith once delivered to the Saints,"

"Resolved: That the said Convention be at Hookerton, Greene County, North Carolina, and that it commence on the Friday before the first Lord's Day in May, 1845.

"Resolved: That the following persons be requested to attend said Convention in behalf of this Conference, viz: Elders Thomas J. Latham, John L. Clifton, Henry Smith, Benjamin Parrott, Robert Bond, William Magowns; and Brethren: Seth H. Tyson, Winsor Dixon, Reuben Barrow, David Lewis, Jacob McCotter, Abraham Baker, Joel Joyner, Jr., Laban Wilkinson, and Henry D. Lewis; and that they report the proceedings of said Convention to the next Conference, for its satisfaction.

"Resolved: That Elder Robert Bond be requested to visit such Churches of Christ as take the Holy Scriptures alone as their Rule of Faith and Practice, and invite them to meet us by delegates in said Convention, in order to promote a Christian Union." [*Clerk takes his seat.*]

Moderator: How shall we proceed to handle this?

Robert Bond: I move that the moderator appoint a committee to draw up a paper that represents us.

Benjamin Parrott: I agree.

Moderator: Moved and agreed that we appoint a committee to do this work. Question: Those in favor say, Yea. [*Chorus of yeas.*] Those opposed say, Nay. [*No negative votes.*]

Moderator: Very well. I appoint Elders Robert Bond, John P. Dunn, and Jacob Utley, on the committee to make report. [*Committee retires.*] Now Brethren and Sisters let us sing one of our good old songs.

[*The song leader lines the following hymn, and the group on stage sings it in proper meter of the period. It is adapted from an old hymnal of that period.*]

Christians, don't you want a teacher,
Helper, counsellor and guide?
Don't you want a gospel-preacher?
Ask the Lord and He'll provide.
Happy soul who loves and follows
Jesus speaking in His word;
Paul and Cephas, and Apollos,
All are one in Christ the Lord.

While the gospel is a preaching,
Jesus stands with open arms,
Warning sinners and beseeching
Come, behold the gospel charms.
Lord remove the false foundation,
Where their tottering hopes are found;
Let the gospel invitation,
Cultivate the barren ground.

[*Committee returning, file in.*]

Robert Bond: Brother Moderator, the committee majority gives you this report: [*Reads from manuscript on foolscap paper.*]

"Delegates met in Hookerton, Greene County, N. C., on the second of May 1845, from the Bethel Conference and also from the Union Meeting of the Disciples of Christ; and taking into consideration the importance of Christian Union in order to the conversion of the world to pure and undefiled religion, after a free inter-

change of views on both sides, agreed, that the Bethel Conference and Union Meeting of the Disciples of Christ should unite and form one body, upon the following conditions, viz: That the annual meeting shall hereafter be known by the name of "The Bethel Conference and Union Meeting of the Disciples of Christ"; that the Churches composing said "Bethel Conference and Union Meeting" shall claim no other name than that of Churches of Christ; and that they shall take the Bible alone as their only Rule of Faith and Practice, and discard as entirely useless, all human creeds, traditions, or commandments of uninspired men."

John L. Clifton: I move the adoption of the report.

Winsor Dixon: I agree.

Moderator: Brethren before our vote there must be discussion, since the committee itself is divided. Discussion is now in order.

Benjamin Parrott: Brother Moderator, that report suits me exactly, and everybody in the congregations where I serve, except, it might be, a very few.

Robert Bond: Brother Moderator, I traveled throughout the connection and I am positive that this represents the overwhelming sentiment of the congregations in the Bethel Conference.

John P. Dunn: Brother Moderator, the Disciples' Union has long asked for this, and there is nothing more I need to add.

Cynthia Dunn: Brother Moderator, I know that you brethren quote the Bible as saying that women should keep silent in the Churches, but about our Lord's business, I must express my heart. Our church at Kinston started out on this Christian Union ground, and we are going to stay right on it. So, as I see it, we are doing just right today. I am proud of it. Our children will rise up and call it a blessed day.

Moderator: We will now hear the opposition.

Jacob Utley: Brother Moderator, I'm proud to represent the opposition. I'm against this report because I know that many of my dear brethren won't accept it. We

were doing well until Campbellism come along; now it is water salvation we hear on every side. And our dear old creed! [*He sobs.*] Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth before I say aught against it. As long as I have the creed, I can point to it, and say, "That's what I believe." If it is just the Bible, everybody owns that, and all sorts of doctrine can be preached from it. And you have changed our good old name. Next thing, you'll be joining secret societies, and be taking away our feet-washing. Even the Campbellite Bible says: "You also ought to wash one another's feet." My mind is made up! I shall not be moved!

[*Several stand as if to argue, crying Brother Moderator!*]

Moderator: He said his mind is set. He is beyond our argument. Are you ready for the question.

[*Crys of "Question".*]

Moderator: Let all who favor this report, stand. [*All stand except Jacob and Margaret Utley.*]

Moderator: Now let the opposers stand.

[*Jacob and Margaret Utley stand. Jacob goes to his wife, Margaret and as he leads her out, says with emphasis:*]

"Come on wife, let's get out of this mess, and don't you look back, or you'll be turned into a pillar of salt."

Winsor Dixon: I do not agree with Elder Utley. But he has my sympathy. I've traveled his road. Only by the grace of God was I led to light and liberty. Toward him and all others whose understanding goes not with us, we must have that love that "thinketh no evil."

Moderator: Others have labored and we have entered into their labors. We too have labored. The fruit of our toil is to-day's Christian Union. We bequeath it to the ages.

Our hymn of consecration will be our benediction.

[*All on the stage stand while led in singing by long meter, the following.*]

Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee;
I am poor, despised, forsaken
Thou henceforth my all shalt be:
Perish every fond ambition
All I've sought, or hoped, or known;
Yet how rich is my condition
God and heaven are still my own.

Haste Thee on from grace to glory,
Armed by faith, and winged by prayer,
Heaven's eternal day's before thee,
God's own hand shall guide thee there.
Soon shall close thy earthly mission;
Soon shall pass thy pilgrims days;
Hope shall change to glad fruition,
Faith to sight, and prayer to praise.

[*Curtain falls.*]

THE END.